



[Paulo Freire, 1921 - 1997](#)

Pedagogy

In the first sentence of Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of The Oppressed" (**attached**, please find Chapter 1, or use the link below) Freire "problematizes" humanisation.

"...but while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people's vocation," says Freire.

This immediately places Freire side-by-side with Karl Marx, where Marx in the whole of "Capital", and all his life, wanted to restore humanity to itself.

Or again, as in the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, where

Marx wrote:

“Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower.”

Here, on page 3 of Chapter One of the “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, is Freire’s answer to “Dialectical Materialism”:

“... one cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity. Neither can exist without the other, nor can they be dichotomized. The separation of objectivity from subjectivity, the denial of the latter when analyzing reality or acting upon it, is objectivism. On the other hand, the denial of objectivity in analysis or action, resulting in a subjectivism which leads to solipsistic positions, denies action itself by denying objective reality. Neither objectivism nor subjectivism, nor yet psychologism is propounded here, but rather subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship.

Neither objectivism nor subjectivism but rather subjectivity and objectivity in constant dialectical relationship: this could serve as a one-sentence summary of our course on Philosophy and Religion. Freire goes on, while explicitly embracing his connection with Marx:

“To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic. It

is to admit the impossible: a world without people. This objectivistic position is as ingenuous as that of subjectivism, which postulates people without a world. World and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction. Man does not espouse such a dichotomy; nor does any other critical, realistic thinker. What Marx criticized and scientifically destroyed was not subjectivity, but subjectivism and psychologism.”

The significance of the Subject in Freire’s theoretical scheme is clear all the way through and is demonstrated by these words from the last paragraph of his Chapter 1:

“Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators.”

The Communists, in their own minds and in their intentions, seek to educate, organise and mobilise, not so as to command the working class and the general masses, but to set them free.

The problem of how to do so is exactly the problem that Freire addresses in “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed.” It requires the formulation quoted above: **“World and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction.”** Nowhere does Freire refer to materialism, whether dialectical or

otherwise. He writes about leadership and people both being Subjects, and co-intent on reality.

This is the interface that gives meaning to both education and to politics, and it is rooted in philosophy.

We are talking of revolutionary pedagogy. We are talking here of teaching with a purpose and a reason that anyone can understand (i.e. “intentionality”) – especially the students. We are talking of liberation. In South Africa, this is called “people’s education for people’s power”.

In the next chapter we will dwell upon the dreadful mistakes that can be made if we fall into the errors of what Freire calls “the banking theory of education”.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Pedagogy of The Oppressed, Chapter 1, 1970, Freire.](#)
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